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Message Text

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60
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EA-11 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

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R 270934Z MAR 74
FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO USDOC WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 7962
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRN, PK
SUBJECT: NEWS REPORTS CONCERNING "UNDERGROUND RAILWAY SYSTEM"
FOR KARACHI.

1. OVER PAST FEW WEEKS KARACHI PRESS HAS CARRIED REPORTS CONCERNING ARRIVAL AND ACTIVITIES OF 6-MAN JAPANESE TEAM FOR PRELIMINARY SURVEY ON WHAT PRESS DESCRIBES AS "MODERN UNDERGROUND RAILWAY SYSTEM" FOR KARACHI. LATEST PRESS REPORT CARRIED IN DAWN MARCH 26 STATED SECOND TEAM JAPANESE EXPERTS WOULD ARRIVE IN SEPT TO MAKE SOIL TESTS AND "COMPLETE OTHER TECHNICAL FORMALITIES ON THE BASIS OF WHICH FUNDS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED UNDERGROUND TUBE SYSTEM". PRESS ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECT AT 2 BILLION RUPEES.

2. DURING EXTENSIVE REVIEW BY UNDP OF SECOND CYCLE OF KARACHI MASTER PLAN A MONTH AGO, SOLUTION PROPOSED FOR EXPANSION KARACHI MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONSISTED PURCHASE OVER NEXT TEN YEARS OF SOME 3,300 BUSES, TOGETHER WITH SOME IMPROVEMENT TO PRESENT KARACHI CIRCULAR RAIL SYSTEM ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR
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FREIGHT HAULAGE IN ORDER IMPROVE PASSENGER HANDLING CAPACITY.

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SECOND CYCLE OF KARACHI MASTER PLAN, WHICH DRAFTED FOR UNDP BY HIGHLY QUALIFIED U.S. PLANNING FIRM PADCO, REJECTED UNDERGROUND RAIL SYSTEM AS COMPLETELY BEYOND FINANCIAL MEANS OF KARACHI AND COUNTRY AS A WHOLE.

3. FOLLOWING APPEARANCE MARCH 26 NEWSPAPER REPORT CONGENOFF SPOKE WITH PADCO PLANNING EXPERT AT OFFICE OF KARACHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (KDA). HE CONFIRMED PADCO AND KDA CONTINUE BELIEVE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT KARACHI BUS SYSTEM IS ONLY SOLUTION TO PRESENT MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS WITHIN FINANCIAL MEANS OF MUNICIPALITY AND THAT EVEN AN ELEVATED RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM, WHICH LESS EXPENSIVE THAN SUBWAY, WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE UNTIL AT LEAST 1985 AND PROBABLY NOT UNTIL YEAR 2000. HE SAID JAPANESE TEAM HAD INSISTED ON COMING, PERHAPS ON PROMPTING FROM SOMEONE IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, BUT MAINTAINED NO ACTUAL UNDERGROUND CONSTRUCTION COULD POSSIBLY RESULT.

4. PADCO NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY UNDP FOR DEVELOPING AND DRAFTING THIRD AND FINAL CYCLE OF MASTER PLAN, WHICH WILL INCLUDE ACTUAL PROJECT IDENTIFICATION ON WHICH TO BASE REQUESTS FOR LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL LENDING ORGANIZATIONS. IF PADCO SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING THIRD CYCLE CONTRACT IT WILL BE WORKING HERE WITH AUGMENTED STAFF OVER 18-MONTH PERIOD STARTING JULY 1974.

5. COMMENT: CONSTRUCTION OF SUBWAY IN KARACHI SEEMS TO HAVE FASCINATED SOME GOP OFFICIALS AS A PRESTIGE SYMBOL, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION IN CALCUTTA. PADCO PLANNERS HAD REJECTED IT AS TOO EXPENSIVE OVER YEAR AGO WHEN THEY WERE CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY TFF ELEVATED RAILWAY SYYSTEM WHICH NTW ALSO REEJECTED.
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